BOOK REVIEWS

Holdford DA. *Marketing for Pharmacists*, 2nd Edition, Washington DC: American Pharmacists Association; 2007. 333 pp, $52.00 (hardcover), ISBN: 978-1-58212-106-2.

Reviewed By: Donna S. West, PhD
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Pharmacists today in all practice settings are developing and implementing advanced practice models focused on delivering innovative goods and services. For these new practice models to be successful, it is critical that pharmacists understand marketing and have marketing resources available. This book *Marketing for Pharmacists, 2nd Edition*, fulfills this need and provides a comprehensive overview of marketing concepts and their application to pharmacy. Although there are general marketing books, pharmaceutical marketing books, and pharmacy management books available, this book focuses specifically on how pharmacists can market their goods and services.

As the authors state in the preface, the target audience includes pharmacy students, faculty members, and pharmacists in institutional and ambulatory settings. It is an excellent resource for faculty members teaching a pharmacy management course, a marketing course, or a course pertaining to service development. I believe the book would also be useful to pharmacy preceptors, residency directors, and new practitioners; all of whom are often developing new practice opportunities.

The book has 13 chapters divided into 6 sections. Dr. Holdford wrote the first 5 sections and Dr. Carrol wrote the last section. Because of the limited number of authors, the chapters flow and there is little, if any, redundancy between them. Each chapter contains objectives, text, references, and additional supplemental readings, exercises, and discussion questions, and an activity idea. The text includes anecdotal stories that demonstrate the relevancy of the topic, text boxes with main points, numerous figures and tables, and a summary section, which make it reader-friendly, especially for pharmacy students or others new to marketing. From a faculty perspective, it is the additional readings, exercises, discussion questions, and activity ideas that set this book apart and increase its value. An instructor manual and PowerPoint slides that correlate with the text are also available. The book provides brief descriptions of marketing theories and then focuses on their application to pharmacy practice. However, students and practitioners who want to find further information about specific marketing theories and concepts can refer to the additional readings.

The book content is similar to the first edition. Part I (Chapters 1, 2) provides an excellent summary of marketing concepts. I agree with the authors that it should be read by all pharmacists and pharmacy students. Part II (Chapters 3, 4, 5) discusses elements of services, how to manage service performance, and designing pharmacy services. Part III (Chapters 6, 7) pertains to consumer behavior. Although market research is addressed, the authors do not devote a significant amount of pages to the various aspects of market research. Part IV discusses marketing strategy and Part V discusses segmentation and promotion. I believe these 2 parts (IV and V) are the heart of the book. They include in-depth discussions of marketing strategy, from conducting an environmental analysis to developing strategies and positioning products to selecting a target market, to promoting the products. Part VI covers the last 2 P's of marketing: price and place. The place chapter mainly pertains to goods and channels of distribution and less to pharmacy layout and placement of services.

This is a worthy addition to any pharmacy library or personal library. Any pharmacist who is interested in growing his/her practice or business will find the book helpful as the topics can be broadly applied. As pharmacy services evolve in a changing healthcare system, many principles covered in this book will remain, making the book a good one to have on hand.

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Furberg BD, Furberg CD. *Evaluating Clinical Research – All That Glitters Is Not Gold*, 2nd edition. New York: Springer; 2007. 170 pp, $29.95 (softcover), ISBN: 978-0387728988.

Reviewed By: Larry Sasich
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Over the years, my uncontrolled observations in teaching pharmacy students and new clinicians the ins and outs of drug literature evaluation has led to the discovery, with tongue-in-cheek, that many new users of clinical research have acquired a condition that could be called "statistical anxiety." The pathognomonic feature of this disorder is the obsession that only if the source and meaning of the "p" value were known, then the evaluation of clinical research could be simply and quickly mastered. The potential harm of "statistical anxiety" may be the failure

to focus on the magnitude of the difference between treatment groups, and whether the outcome of interest is actually meaningful to patients.

Evaluating Clinical Research may offer prevention or treatment for "statistical anxiety." One chapter is titled "Is it necessary to be a biostatistician to interpret scientific data?" This chapter is clearly written for the novice and covers topics such as the role of sample size, subgroup analyses, and confidence intervals. The authors are up front in saying that readers will not be turned into statistical experts. They also encourage readers to form their own opinions, even if their statistical knowledge is limited. Thinking critically is a thread that consistently runs throughout the book.

As with all chapters, this chapter ends with several take-home messages or key points: (1) statistical significance is not the same as clinical relevance; (2) treatment effects can be missed if trials are too small (ie, underpowered); (3) multiple statistical testing requires adjustment of the *p* value; (4) beware of post-hoc subgroup analyses; and (5) confidence intervals provide valuable information for clinicians.

Evaluating Clinical Research is only 161 pages in length and contains 26 chapters. The individual chapters ask a series of questions that would be expected from those new to clinical research evaluation. The chapters are arranged in an order that guides readers through the strengths and weaknesses of various study designs: "What are the strengths of randomized controlled clinical trials?"; "Do meta-analyses provide the ultimate truth?" and "How much confidence can be placed on economic analysis?" Three very important chapters cover topics that are currently being debated in the research and clinical communities: "What is the value of biologic markers in drug evaluation?" "Do changes in biologic markers predict clinical benefit?" and "How informative are composite outcomes?"

Published research studies are used to emphasize important concepts in evaluating clinical research. For example, Chapter 13: "What is the value of biologic markers in drug evaluation?" used the Cardiac Arrhythmia Suppression Trial (CAST) to illustrate what can happen when surrogate endpoints are the basis for forming an opinion on the therapeutic value of a new drug. Antiarrhythmic treatment successfully reduced the number of ventricular extrasystoles as predicted by proponents of these drugs, but treatment unexpectedly increased the risk of death.

The use of published drug studies to underscore important concepts is a valuable component of *Evaluating Clinical Research*. An added bonus for the reader is that one of the authors, Curt D. Furberg, MD, PhD, was involved in conducting the CAST trial while at the National Institutes of Health (NIH). Dr. Furberg has a long history that will be recognized by many in evaluating the safety and effectiveness of drugs. He was the principle investigator for the Antihypertensive and Lipid-Lowering Treatment to Prevent Heart Attack Trial (ALLHAT). He is a Professor in the Division of Health Science, Wake Forest University School of Medicine. A founding member of the Food and Drug Administration's (FDA) Drug Safety and Risk Management Advisory Committee, he was a part of the debate on the safety of the COX-2 drugs and most recently rosiglitazone (*Avandia*). He is also a co-author of *Fundamentals of Clinical Trials* with Friedman and DeMets.

His co-author and brother, Bengt D. Furberg, MD, PhD, brings an important perspective to the book. He was a medical director in the pharmaceutical industry for a decade and now serves as a consultant, evaluating the safety and efficacy of drugs and medical devices and promoting evidence-based medicine.

New users of clinical research will find the book's glossary a useful resource for refreshing the memory on those clinical trial and statistical terms that always seem difficult for students to remember, such as the difference between a type I and type II error. Although useful in its current form, expanding the glossary to include additional key terms would greatly add to its value.

The authors provide a checklist for evaluating clinical research that may be useful for those new to the subject. The checklist is divided into 4 categories: design, results, interpretation, and clinical importance. Within each category, 2 or 3 questions are asked. For example, under clinical importance the 2 questions are (1) "Were the study patients similar to the patients in my practice?" and (2) "Is the treatment benefit large enough to be important to my patients?"

This second edition of *Evaluating Clinical Research* is used in our school's required course sequence in drug information for first-professional year students and forms the basis for further didactic discussions of clinical research evaluation topics in greater depth. Informal feedback about the book from students has been very positive. Students have found the book clearly written and logical to follow. Faculty members who have purchased this textbook have commented on the usefulness of the book in brushing up on literature evaluation topics that are not regularly required in their practices. They have also found the chapters that present topics on the emerging and evolving issues of biomarkers and surrogate endpoints in evaluating new drugs useful.

In summary, *Evaluating Clinical Research, 2nd ed*, can be recommended as a required textbook for drug

information courses and a refresher text for pharmacy practice faculty members.

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Stuart MC. *The Complete Guide to Medical Writing*. London, United Kingdom. Pharmaceutical Press; 2007. 512 pp, $39.95 (softcover), ISBN 978-0-85369-667-4.

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As noted in the preface of *The Complete Guide to Medical Writing*, medical writing is becoming recognized as a unique skill that must be developed. It should not be assumed that a university education in a medical field creates a proficient writer. All of the section authors stress that the written word be clear, concise, and accurate, particularly when used to communicate medical information. This book presents medical writing guidance in an informal and entertaining manner, sometimes using real-world examples. Most of the 6 sections are by authors who write for British audiences. Thus, the tone of the book, recommended references, and style suggestions are most relevant to medical writers in those countries.

The Complete Guide to Medical Writing covers a wide variety of topics pertinent to a medical writer. This book is written in a casual, brief, and condensed format and as such, the information is provided at a level of detail below that sought by most advanced writers. Sections of this book explain in simple and straight forward terms how to write a book, manuscript, thesis, or standard operating procedure. Advice on whether to pursue a project, descriptions of the responsibilities of an editor, step-by-step instructions on where to find information, suggestions on writing for mass media, and explanations on how to give presentations and write examination papers are also presented. These are topics about which entire books are written.

The preface also states that the book is a ''quick-ready reference for common terms and values when writing.'' This sentence is an accurate refection of the book's content, unlike the title. A medical writer who seeks a ''complete'' guide will need to realize that no such text currently exists. If it did, it would be very lengthy and should be electronic. Typically, medical writers rely on well-respected medical and English dictionaries, a style manual, and the publication's house style guide to answer questions related to writing.

A book such as *The Complete Guide to Medical Writing* might be useful for a new writer seeking an overview of a variety of aspects of medical writing. In addition, the practical advice offered by some of the authors may give valuable perspective to the new writer. Overall, however, this book is one that most medical writers will outgrow within a few years of practice.

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